

## ENERGY STAR Update

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
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### Utility Programs Partner with ENERGY STAR to Help Customers Improve Building Performance

Utilities and other organizations that sponsor energy efficiency programs are teaming up with EPA to leverage ENERGY STAR to help their customers improve building performance to save energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

For decades, utilities around the country have offered their customers programs to invest in energy efficiency as a way to meet a portion of the growing demand for energy. For commercial customers, these programs have been focused on defined financial incentives to install energy efficient lighting or heating and cooling equipment, custom incentives for larger, more complicated projects and programs to find operation and maintenance improvements through retro commissioning.

A growing number of utility-funded efficiency programs are now offering customers easy access to their utility data for automatic upload in the recently revamped ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager benchmarking tool. EPA created ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager®, an online tool to measure and track energy and water consumption, as well as greenhouse gas emissions, to help building owners improve their energy and water usage.

**COOL FACTS:** With close to 40% of the commercial building floor space using Portfolio Manager, the tool is an industry-accepted way to benchmark the performance of one building or a whole portfolio of buildings. [Eight utilities](#), serving a combined 3.3 million commercial customers, have invested in web services to electronically upload utility data into Portfolio Manager, providing their customers with more time to spend on identifying strategic improvements than on data entry. And customers are responding --- about 24,000 buildings are benchmarking using these Web services directly from utilities, and the number keeps growing.

Building owners are turning their attention to managing energy by using nearly 150 energy, greenhouse gas and water performance metrics as the basis of their strategic planning. One of these metrics, the 1-100 ENERGY STAR score, ranks a building's energy efficiency against similar buildings nationwide and is being used to alert management about whether they have a top performing or low performing building.

A few leading utility programs, most recently Illinois' Commonwealth Edison (ComEd) and Consumers Energy in Michigan are taking advantage of the benefits of adopting a strategic energy management program and have partnered with EPA to develop a [Building Performance with ENERGY STAR](#) program for their customers. Building Performance with ENERGY STAR helps utilities leverage the tools and resources of ENERGY STAR by targeting one or more specific commercial building sectors (ComEd's program targets commercial real estate and Consumers Energy engages K-12 school districts). Program participants agree to benchmark with ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager and use this information to develop a strategic energy management plan. Together, the utility and customer assess one or two properties to identify whole building energy efficiency opportunities and develop a plan to move forward with building improvements.

By taking a strategic approach to energy efficiency investment, they can immediately reduce energy use through operation and maintenance improvements and plan for future capital upgrades taking advantage of synergies between the two. For example, if air conditioning needs can be reduced by using more efficient, cooler burning lighting, or better management of computer equipment, then older chillers can be replaced with smaller more efficient units. And for owners of multiple properties, lessons and practices learned in one property can be applied to similar properties.

*Products, homes and buildings that earn the ENERGY STAR label prevent greenhouse gas emissions by meeting strict energy efficiency requirements set by the U.S. EPA. In 2012 alone, Americans, with the help of ENERGY STAR, saved \$24 billion on their utility bills and prevented greenhouse gas emissions equal to those of 41 million vehicles. From the first ENERGY STAR qualified computer in 1992, the ENERGY STAR label can now be found on products in more than 65 different categories, with more than 4.5 billion sold over the past 20 years. Over 1.4 million new homes and 20,000 office buildings, schools and hospitals have earned the ENERGY*

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